

## REMARKS

Applicants would initially like to thank the Examiner for the allowance of claims 17 and 18, and indication of allowable subject matter in pending claims 11 and 14.

Claims 9-18 remain in the application. Claims 9-11 and 13 have been amended. No other claims have been added, cancelled or amended.

The Office Action rejects independent claims 9 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Zicker in view of McConnell et al. (“McConnell”). Applicants traverse the rejection.

Claim 9 as amended recites “simultaneously suspending, in response to a control signal, forwarding incoming calls to the plurality of user.” Claim 13 similarly recites that the “ground station being configured to at least temporarily simultaneously discontinue, in response to a control signal, forwarding incoming calls to the plurality of users.” As the Office Action concedes, the primary Zicker reference does not teach or suggest any suspension of incoming calls, let alone a simultaneous suspension of incoming calls.

What is lacking from Zicker is not provided by McConnell. McConnell teaches that, for an individual incoming call, the system will temporarily suspend the individual incoming call while the system determines whether the line for the called party is available. This clearly occurs on a call-by-call basis whenever the individual calls are received. McConnell does not teach or suggest a simultaneous suspension of all incoming calls to a plurality of users. Indeed, simultaneous suspension would have no purpose nor effect in the McConnell system, either alone or in combination with Zicker. It would amount to an effective shutdown of the entire McConnell system, which would most certainly affect calls in progress in contravention of the language of claims 9 and 13.

Accordingly the proposed combination of Zicker and McConnell fails to teach every limitation of claims 9 and 13 as amended, and fails to provide suggestion or motivation to modify their teachings to meet these limitations. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the same are

therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 10, 12 and 15, which depend from the above-noted independent claims (either directly or through intervening claims) have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Zicker in view of McConnell. In view of at least the reasons discussed above, these dependent claims are likewise believed patentably distinct over the applied art. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the same is therefore respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects independent claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Zicker in view of McConnell. Applicants traverse the rejection.

Claim 16 recites “sending a control signal representing a request for the ground-based network to discontinue forwarding incoming calls to the vehicle.” McConnell teaches suspending incoming calls to individual users on a call-by-call basis, not the wholesale suspension of calls to an entire vehicle. To the contrary, even if Zicker and McConnell were properly combined (a point which Applicants contest), the resulting system would simply suspend individual incoming calls on a call-by-call basis to individuals aboard the vehicle while the system checked to determine if the called party was available. It would not result in the wholesale discontinuation of incoming calls being sent to the vehicle.

Accordingly, claim 16 is patentably distinct over the applied art. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the same is therefore respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in proper form for allowance, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

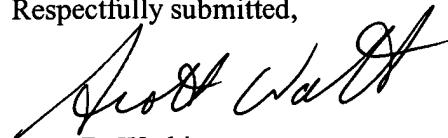
If a telephone conference would be of value, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

PATENT APPLICATION  
Attorney Docket: 11696.0054

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge/credit any fee deficiencies/overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-4293 (11696.4009).

Date: March 16, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

  
Scott D. Watkins  
Registration No. 36,715  
Steptoe & Johnson, LLP  
1330 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: (202) 429-8056; Fax: (202) 429-3902